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Mr. *MILLES*'s

S E R M O N

Before the U N I V E R S I T Y,

On the XXXth. of *January*, &c.

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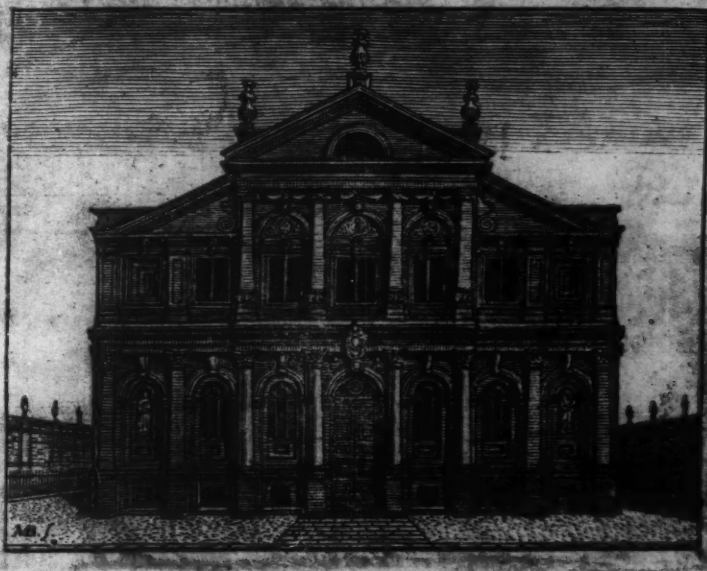
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The Happiness of those that suffer for Righteousness sake:

I N A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT
St. *MARIES* in *OXFORD*,
On the XXXth. of JANUARY 17⁰⁰/₀₁.

By THOMAS MILLES A.M. of St. *Edmund* Hall.

Printed at the Request of Mr. *Vice-Chancellor*,
and others, who heard it Preach'd.



OXFORD,

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All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Persecution.

2 Tim. III. 12.

Si vos Acies provocaverit, si certaminis vestri Dies venerit, militate fortiter, dimicite constanter, scientes vos sub Oculis praesentis Domini dimicare, Confessione nominis ejus ad ipsius Gloriam pervenire; qui non sic est, ut servos suos tantum spectet, sed & ipse luctatur in nobis, ipse concreditur, ipse in certamine Agonis nostri, & Coronat pariter, & Coronatur. Quod si ante Diem certaminis vestri de indulgentia Domini pax supervenerit, vobis tamen maneat voluntas integra, conscientia gloriosa. S. Cyprian. Epist. VIII. ad Martyres & Confessores.



TO THE REVEREND
Dr. MANDER
MASTER of BALLIOL College,
AND
VICE-CHANCELLOR
OF THE
UNIVERSITY of OXFORD.

REVEREND SIR,

THE following Sermon, which was
Preached by your Appointment, and is
now Published at your Command, (for
such I esteem your desires) Addresses it self with
all Humility to you to be its Patron. There is
nothing, I must confess, in the Style, or Composi-
tion of it, which can deserve the Honour of have-
ing so great a Name prefix'd to it: but yet the
honesty of the Design is such, as makes me hope
you will not think it unworthy both of your Ac-
ceptance and Protection.

It is very easy to observe, how Industiously,
and Artificially the greatest endeavours have
of late been made, not onely to lessen the Worth,
but also to lay odious Imputations on the Memory
of that B. Martyr, K. Charles I: nay, some have
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proceeded to such a height of Wickedness, as even to Ridicule, and that too in the most Barbarous manner, the Observation of that Day, which the Supreme Authority of the Nation has thought fit to be set apart, the more solemnly to lament his Murder, together with our ^{other} National Crimes. These Men, it seems, imagine, either that the Sin of Murdering a King is not of so heinous a Nature, as to require so extraordinary a Repentance, or, which is more probable, that it is no Sin at all, but a great, and a glorious Action. It is to be hoped, that such Impiety will be no longer endur'd in a Christian Nation, but that those Honourable and Worthy Gentlemen, who constitute the Great Council of this Kingdom, and who think the affairs of Religion, so far as they fall under their Consideration, not unworthy their peculiar Regard, will, when in their great Wisdom they shall judge it meet, by some Publick Declaration of their Displeasure against these Men, maintain God's Honour, assert their own Authority, and do Justice to the Memory of this Excellent Prince.

Those who look narrowly into the springs and motives of the late unhappy Wars, cannot fail to make this Observation, That both their Beginning, and fatal Period in the Murder of the King, was chiefly owing to his firm adherence to Episcopacy. That the Rebellion was begun upon
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this Account, is roundly asserted by an Author, to whom, some perhaps may be inclin'd to pay a greater Deference, than if a much honestier Man had said it; I mean Milton. He tells us, what no body, he says, is ignorant of, that when the Parliament, being eagerly bent to reform the Church of England according to the Model of the other Protestant Churches, (he means those in France, Germany, and the United Provinces; where they have no Bishops) had determin'd to extirpate Episcopacy, the King first oppos'd it, and afterwards for that very Reason began the war upon them; as he, impudently misrepresenting the History, expresses it. And by the Minutes of that last Treaty he entered into with his Subjects in the Isle of Wight, it plainly appears, That if he would have consented without Reserve or Limitation to the Proposals then made him, two of which were, for the Abolishing of Bishops, and a Sacrilegious Alienation of their Lands, He might have saved his Life, and gained his Liberty. From all which, we cannot without the greatest Grief reflect upon the present miserable State of our Church, in which, it is to be feared, there are not a few, even of those that Minister at the Altar, who would be ready, upon the first summons of a Prevailing Power, basely to surrender up that Divine Institution,

for

Neminem hoc latet, cum regni Ordines, Ecclesie nostrae ad exemplum ceterarum reformandae studio flagrantibus, Episcopatum funditus tollere statuissem, primo Regem intercessisse, dein bellum nobis ea potissimum causa intulisse. Milton. Praefat. in Defens. Pop. Anglican.

*for the Preservation of which, this B. Martyr so
Couragiously resisted, even unto blood.*

*I might now, Sir, lay hold of this Opportunity
to make publick mention of your Virtues. The
Exemplary care you take to preserve, and main-
tain the Discipline of the Univerfity, which with
so much Honour to your self, and Advantage to
us you now happily Prefide over, is what all that
know this Place must give an Attestation to. But
your unwillingness to hear your own just Praises,
obliges me to draw a Veil over your other Per-
fections; for which no one can have a greater
Value, and more profound Respect, than,*

SIR,

Your most Obliged

and Humble Servant,

S^t. Edmund Hall,
Feb. 18. 17⁸⁰.

THOMAS MILLES.

A S E R M O N

Preached before the UNIVERSITY,
On the XXXth. of *January*, &c.

I Pet. III. 14.

If ye suffer for Righteousness sake, happy are ye.

AMongst those many and peculiar Excellencies of the Christian Religion this is one of the chief, that tho' the Profession and Practice of it may not always be the best way to avoid Persecution and Sufferings, yet it is that alone which administers the best support and comfort under all the pressures and calamities, which this Life is liable to. There is nothing that conduces more to give our Minds a just Idea of the shortness of these temporary Afflictions, than the consideration of that *Life and Immortality, which is brought to light by the Gospel*, nor can any thing more directly tend to disarm the sharpest Tryals of their Sting, than that *Exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory*, which will be the reward of them. Hence it was, that the first Professors of this Reli-

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gion so patiently and chearfully suffer'd the most painful and ignominious Deaths, and that the *Ignatiuses*, and *Polycarps*, the *Justins* and the *Cyprians* of the first Ages advanced the credit of Christianity more by the Sufferings than their Doctrine; and hence it was, lastly, that the *B. Martyr* of this Day, whose innocent blood we have but just now besought God not to visit upon us nor our Posterity, was enabled with such Christian Courage and Resignation, to endure the Indignities and Affronts, and at last to submit his Royal Neck to the Fatal Stroke of his most Barbarous and Implacable Enemies.

But Christianity carries us yet farther; and not only supports us under the severer Inflictions of Providence, but also gives us the best ground to think our selves very happy amidst the greatest Calamities. And this is what was in vain attempted by the wisest Schemes of Philosophy the Heathen Sages could invent, and would seem too great a Paradox to be easily credited, in an Age that places its supreme happiness in the gratifications of sense, if the Example of our Saviour, the Apostles, and of that Noble Army of Martyrs, with which they are incircled, as well as the express Doctrines of our Religion had not taught us, That the loss of all that is dear to us in this World, even of our very Lives, if it be for *Righteousness sake*, should be so far from dejecting our Spirits, and making

making us start, and shrink back at the gloomy prospect, that we ought to rejoyce and triumph under it. *If ye suffer for Righteousness sake happy are ye.* From which words I shall shew

I. When we may be said to *suffer for Righteousness sake.*

II. That those who *suffer for Righteousness sake* are *happy.*

III. I shall make some Application of the whole to the Occasion of the present Solemnity.

I. I will consider when we may be said to *suffer for Righteousness sake.* And here we must not think, that those suffer for Righteousness sake, who fall under the hand of Justice for propagating their own mistaken Opinions, or for following any wicked Practice. Truth and Falshood, Right and Wrong, Virtue and Vice, are of so different a Nature, and carry such evident marks of distinction upon them, especially in the great and fundamental points of Religion, and Morality, that it must be our own great fault, if we mistake about them: and therefore the plea of an Erroneous Conscience will never excuse us either in the sight of God or Man. If a strong perswasion of the Mind concerning the truth or lawfulness of any thing could be sufficient to justify our mistakes in Opinion, or Vices in practice, the wildest Enthusiast might justly pretend to Saintship, and those Execrable Regicides,

who, as upon this Day, shed the blood of the best of Kings, when their Villanies had found them out, and from the Sword of Justice they had receiv'd the *due Reward of their Deeds*, have had a good claim to the Crown of Martyrdom.

Nor can they be said to suffer for Righteousness sake, who, out of an indiscreet and too forward zeal, throw themselves upon Tryals and Suffering, and seem to court and catch at Dangers and Death, tho' for the sake of God and Religion. Of such it may be justly demanded, *who has requir'd this at your hands?* Our Saviour, who has commanded us to *pray that we enter not into Temptation*, and *when we are persecuted in one City to flee to another*, tho' when the confessing him, and preserving our Lives are inconsistent, he obliges us readily to choose Death, yet never design'd we should lavishly squander away our Lives, without any prospect of Advantage to his Religion by it. I would not be thought hereby to reflect upon that Holy Ardor, which prompted the Primitive Martyrs so eagerly to expose themselves, to the utmost Rage and Fury of their Persecutors. Those Divine Persons had great and extraordinary assistances, which we cannot pretend unto: and therefore it would be the highest presumption in us to endeavour to *equal*, what was their greatest Glory and Perfection; the Examples of their Suffering being rather design'd for a further confirmation of

of the Truths of our holy Religion that they that should, *in all respects*, be imitated by succeeding Ages. And even in those Primitive Times the wisdom of some Councils thought fit to restrain the too great forwardness of such Christians, who willingly offered themselves in the day of Tryal. In order therefore to sanctify our Sufferings, and make them acceptable and lovely in the sight of God, we must principally take care, *they* That be undergone in a good Cause, and next, That they be not the necessary consequences of our own carelessness, or indiscretion, folly or rashness. He then may be said to suffer *for Righteousness sake*, whom either the open Profession or Practice of the *true Religion* exposes to Afflictions and Distresses, Persecution and Sufferings.

First, We may be said to *suffer for Righteousness sake*, when we suffer for an open Profession of the *true Religion*. It is a debt which we owe to Truth in general, that when we are upon good grounds convinced, and perswaded of it, we should neither be ashamed nor afraid openly to own and defend it. For Error being such a real blemish to our Natures, and the great parent of all those disorders and miseries, which are incident to humane Affaires, there can be no greater benefit done to Mankind, than to endeavour to root it out, and to plant and propagate Truth in the place
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Cam. IX.
Ch. XI. Pet.
Alex. Vid.
Constit.
Apost. lib.
V. cap. 6.

of it: and therefore a generous Spirit would not shrink from such an Undertaking, tho' it should happen to be attended with some inconveniencies and dangers to himself. And as this is our Duty with regard to all Truth, so it is more especially so with relation to the sacred Truths of our holy Religion: which we are under much stronger obligations openly to own and profess. True Religion is of so great concern, and has so commanding an influence upon both the Temporal and Eternal Interests of Men, that he who looks never so little beyond the narrow limits of his own being, and is not wholly taken up in providing for his private Security and Ease, must needs think himself obliged by all means to endeavour to further and promote it. Now the chief, I might say, the onely method of doing this, is by an undisguised Profession, and a resolute and steddy maintaining of it, in spight and defiance of any difficulties and dangers we may thereby be forced to combat with. This is what our Lord, with a particular regard to the Case before us, *Matt. x. 32.* calls *Confessing him before Men*, and so peremptorily obliges us to it, that he interprets the failure of it as a flat denial, and being *ashamed of him, and his Words*; threatening to deny, and disown such as are guilty of this sin at that great and terrible day, when the best of us will stand in need of his Favour and Countenance. The Primitive

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mitive Christians were so forward to own their Religion, and upon all occasions so ready to give a Reason of the hope that was in 'em, that they even prevented the Demands of their Enemies, and professed themselves Christians before they could be asked, whether they were so or no. They, Good Men, being utterly unacquainted with the modern discoveries in Casuistical Divinity, knew not how, in times of Persecution and Tryal, by dextrously distinguishing Seasons, and Places, and Circumstances, at once to secure their Consciences, and to save their Estates, or to make an honourable Retreat, when they were obliged to maintain a dangerous Post with the loss of their Lives; but like good Souldiers of Jesus Christ, manfully fought for their Saviours Cause, under his own Banners, and not under any False or Foreign Colours, against all the Allurements and Terroures of this World.

Now, when by the Providence of God it shall so fall out, that we cannot defend and propagate our Religion, without the hazard of our Lives: if a *Dioclesian*, a *Constantius*, or a *Julian* should arise, and endeavour by open Force to *extirpate*, or by the secret arts of Treachery to *undermine*, either the whole, or any part of Christianity: when openly to profess the Truth would be to mark ones self out for Destruction, and to keep inviolable the sacred *Depositum*, whether it

it be any grand Article of the Faith, or an Essential part of the Rights, and Discipline of the Church, were to expose our selves to the Frowns and Displeasure, and, it may be, to the Vengeance of the Magistrate: if then we shall dare to be faithful to our great Lord and Master, and bravely to defend his Truths against the fiercest Opposition; tho' we should happen to loose the Day, and with it our Reputation, our Estates, and our Lives, we may notwithstanding support our selves, even under the Agonies of Death, with a full assurance, That we *suffer for Righteousness sake*. But

Secondly, We may be also said to *suffer for Righteousness sake*, when we suffer for a strict Observance of the Rules, and Precepts of the *true Religion*. Religion, we know, consists and shews its self altogether in two things; a *right Belief*, and a *suitable Practice*. When therefore we are fully perswaded of, and vigorously bent to defend and promote any Truth, we should do well to take care, that our own Actions do not contradict our Profession, nor the notorious inconsistency of our Practice, make the World suspect the sincerity of our Pretensions. He that *contends earnestly for the Faith*, and all the while lives as if he did not believe a word of Religion, or is wonderfully zealous for some particular Doctrines of it, and yet, either in the general conduct

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conduct of his Life, or in several single instances shall shew, that how full soever his *Head* may be with them, his *Heart* is not in the least influenced by them, onely Acts a Part, and by ill Acting it takes the most effectual method to ruine that very Cause he would seem to defend. Those who for Fear, or Interest, or out of a desire to enjoy their beloved Ease, betray, or tamely surrender up the Truth, we may justly condemn, and detest: but then let those who are its professed Champions be perswaded to Practise for Religion, as eagerly as they dispute for it; and that, as for many other substantial Reasons, so especially for this one, That those who disbelieve and oppose these Truths, make the inconsistency of their Actions the great, I had almost said, the onely *Argument* for their Infidelity.

But now, tho' an exact Conformity of our Practice to the Precepts of the *true Religion* be thus *necessary*, yet, it must be confessed, that it is not always *safe*. There may be, and no doubt very frequently are, times, wherein Men will no more endure *sound Practice*, than they will *sound Doctrine*: and usually those are the greatest Enemies of the former, who most oppose the latter. Sometimes those that Govern may be on the side of injustice, and *iniquity be established by a Law*: and then what can the Religious,

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the Virtuous Man expect for an honest adherence to the Dictates of his rightly inform'd Conscience, but a Rack or a Gibbet, or to be miserably harrassed by Confiscations and Imprisonments? This was the Case of the Primitive Christians, and of such as in the late times of Usurpation and Confusion, had the courage to suffer in the ruine of the Church and Monarchy. But if the Government should be engaged in favour of Truth and Virtue, yet even then the sincerely Good and Virtuous Man must not promise himself a perfect calm, and security from Persecution. For such is the wretched degeneracy of the World, that the greatest part of the Men in any Place or Country, are not onely themselves loose in their Manners, but sometimes turn Patrons of Vice, and Advocates for Immorality: and then the Governours themselves, if they shall endeavour to suppress the growing Impiety, must not expect to escape the Raillery and Reflections, the great and small Shot, of these sort of Men. But if any private Person shall dare to be so bold, as by a precise Observation of the Duties of Christianity, to signalize and distinguish himself, and by so doing to upbraid them with their wickedness, he shall be looked upon, and treated as a common Enemy, or as one that is unfit to Converse among Men. To give an instance of this: All
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sober Reasoners, I suppose, are agreed, that there can be nothing more directly contrary to the most express Precepts of our Religion, concerning forgiving smaller Injuries, and *not avenging our selves* when the greatest are offer'd, than *Duelling*: and yet, who is there among those numbers of our Gentry, that are befool'd with mistaken Notions of false Honour, who, whatever loud pretences he may make to Courage, would notwithstanding be so hardy, as to plead his Christianity in bar of giving or receiving a *Challenge*, or if he should, be able with patience to endure the Scoffs and Reproaches, the Affronts and Injuries, he must expect to undergo for it. So difficult a thing it is for a sincere Christian to receive his *good things* in this world, and not to forfeit his title to the Rewards of another, and so certainly verified is that Prophecy of our Saviour, *John xv. 20. The servant is not greater than the Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.*

Here therefore is to be seen the Courage, here the Constancy of the *Saints*. Let them chearfully endure the contempt and scorn of a wicked World: let no Difficulties discourage, no Terrors affright, no Pleasures nor Honours entice them from their Duty: but let them go on and persevere: and tho' the Clouds should gather thick about them, and the Waves and Storms

beat violently upon them, let them continue
 Fixt and Immoveable as a Rock; *committing*
1 Pet. IV. 19. *their Souls to God in well-doing, as unto a faith-*
ful Creator: who will certainly Reward their
 Sufferings with that *blessedness*, which he has
Mat. V. 10. promised to them that are *persecuted for Right-*
eousness sake. Thus much for the first thing I
 propos'd, which was, To consider when we might
 be said to *suffer for Righteousness sake*. I pro-
 ceed, in the

II. Place, to prove, That those who thus *suf-*
fer for Righteousness sake, are happy. But this, I
 fear, will seem a strange Assertion, not onely to
 such as have used themselves to relish, and take
 delight in the satisfactions of Sense, but even
 to those whose Apprehensions and Judgements
 are refin'd by Philosophy and Religion. For
 what Happiness, may it be demanded, can there
 be in Pain and Loss? What satisfaction under
 Tryals and Sufferings? Can there be any Plea-
 sure in passing thro' those uncomfortable Paths,
 which lead to *Gethsemane* or *Golgotha*? And is
 not his Condition to be much rather chosen, who
 is carried out of this world by the gentle steps
 that Nature proceeds in, than his, who is forced
 and hurried out of it by a Violence so very shame-
 ful and painful, as to make the manner of Dying
 much more dreadful than Death it self? It is e-
 nough sure, if these things can be born with any
 tolerable

tolerable decency; but that we should be pleas'd, and think our selves happy under them, will be thought such a *Train of Christian Stoicism*, as few, I doubt, will be induc'd to approve of in their Judgements, and much fewer to follow in their Practice. These are indeed plausible suggestions, and such as flesh and blood will very strongly incline us to hearken to: but notwithstanding all this, the Assertion of the Text may upon good grounds be prov'd, That those who *suffer for Righteousness sake are happy*. Now this may be made appear upon these two considerations. *First*, From that *present* support and comfort, which is afforded them *under* their Sufferings. And, *Secondly*, From that Infinitely Glorious, and Eternal Reward, which will be bestowed upon them, *after they are over*. And this I think sufficient to evince the Proposition laid down. For certainly that servant can have no reason to think his condition unhappy, who, whatever Difficult or Dangerous performances may be required of him, has his Master always present to Assist and Encourage him; and, when he has stoutly born the *burden and heat of the day*, to reward him, infinitely beyond what his mean services can in themselves deserve.

I. *First* then, those who *suffer for Righteousness sake*, have a *present* support and comfort *under* the greatest Afflictions. Now this arises and
springs

springs forth from these two things. *First*, from a joyful reflection upon the Innocency and Regularity of their former Lives, together with the consideration of the goodness of the Cause for which they suffer: and, *Next*, from that comfortable Hope, and Assurance they have of a future Recompence to be made them. If he that *suffers for Righteousness sake* can with satisfaction look back upon his past Actions, if upon a nice and curious survey of his whole Life, he finds no ghastly sin to terrifie him, no load of extraordinary guilt upon his Conscience, that sinks his Courage, and drinks up his Spirits, he will easily bear up under whatever miseries or calamities may befall him in this World. Innocence is so naturally productive of a generous and undaunted Spirit, that it has alone supported Men under the greatest Evils of this Life, even when they have had a very uncertain prospect into another World. *Socrates*, when he was going to take off the poisonous draught, as *Plato* informs us in his *Phædo*, upon this single consideration of his having spent his Life well, could not but think, *that if there were any Life after this, he should have nothing to fear in it; but that his condition then would be, at least, as happy as it had been in this World.* And this enabled him to hold the fatal Cup with a steady hand, and to drink down his death without so much

much as the least change in his Countenance. And, a far greater than *Socrates*, *St. Paul*, under a near prospect of his approaching Martyrdom, tells the *Corinthians*, That *his rejoicing was this*, ^{2 Cor. I. 12.} *the testimony of his Conscience*: and when he was *now ready to be offer'd*, his greatest comfort ^{2 Tim. IV. 6, 7.} was, that he had *fought a good Fight, and kept the Faith*. But then on the other hand, guilt has a strange force to enfeeble and intimidate the stoutest Heart. It disarms Men of their Resolution and Constancy, and is apt to make them suspect the goodness of the best Cause. Hence they seek for little subterfuges, and study distinctions to avoid Suffering, and the very sight or thought of Persecution is so terrifying, as to extort from them the vilest submissions and most sinful compliances. 'Tis true indeed, that in the first Ages of Christianity, some otherwise very ill Men would yet bravely suffer Torments and Death for the sake of God and Religion. But this courage proceeded from an Opinion then generally receiv'd, That Martyrdom atton'd for all former Offences, and to be bath'd in ones Blood, was as effectual towards the cleansing us from our sins, as to be washed in the waters of Baptism. How well grounded this Opinion was, I shall not take upon me to determine. Thus however I may venture to say, that Innocence of

Life.

Quicumque propter Nomen Domini passi sunt . . . omnium eorum deleta sunt delicta, quia propter nomen Filii Dei mortem obierunt. S. Hermæ Past. lib. III. Simil. IX. §. 28. Vide S. Cyprianum in Fine Præfat. de Exhortat. Martyrum.

Life will afford us a much better support, and more solid comfort, and whilst we keep all quiet within our own breasts, we cannot be much affected at any thing that befalls us from without.

And as this Consciousness of their own Innocence is sufficient to keep them from all desponding Fears, so will the consideration of the Reasons for which they suffer, give them a fresh supply of Spirits, and make them chearfully undergo the *Fiery Tryal*. Since 'tis the cause of God, who at first Created, and by a new Act of Creation upholds and preserves them in every moment of their Lives, and to whom therefore all their Services, and all their Sufferings too are most justly due, they cannot think any thing too difficult to be perform'd, or too grievous to be undergone for his sake. Since 'tis Religion for which they are engaged, their dearest blood is not too much to be ventured in its Defence. If our Lord did not disdain to come down among us, and live here a miserable Life; if He did not refuse to undergo the *bitter Agonies* of the *Garden*, and the *Cross*, and all to purchase to himself an *Universal Church*, none of his Disciples sure can be so unlike their Master, as not joyfully to endure the greatest Sufferings for the Preservation and Prosperity of this Church. No wonder then that the Apostles were so far from thinking their condition unhappy under the Afflictions
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they endur'd for Christ, that we find them re-
joycing that they were counted worthy to suffer Act. V. 41.
shame for his Name, and that St. Paul reckons
 it as a peculiar honour, and priviledge bestowed
 upon the *Philippians*, That to them it was given Phil. I. 29.
in the behalf of Christ, not onely to believe on
him, but also to suffer for his sake. Now, we
 know, that those *who suffer with Christ, shall* 2 Tim. II. 12.
also reign with him: the certain hope and full,
 assurance of which, *entering into that within the*
Veil, affords that *strong Consolation*, and is that
stedfast Anchor of the Soul, which is the last and
 surest present Support and Refuge those have
 to fly unto, who are persecuted for *Righteousness*
sake.

It is this *hope* which gives the *Martyrs* a pro-
 spect into the other world, and by it they see
 with an Eye of Faith, what St. Stephen did with
 his bodily Eyes, *Heaven opened, and Jesus* Act. VII. 55.
standing at the right hand of God, ready to en-
 courage and comfort them, and to receive their
 Souls. 'Tis this Expectation, that not onely
 makes them bear their Sufferings patiently, but
 also *rejoyce in Tribulations*, whilst they confi-
 der, that *these light afflictions which are but for* 2 Cor. IV. 17.
a moment, will work for them a far more ex-
ceeding and Eternal weight of Glory: upon which
 having their Eyes and their Hearts fixed and
 stay'd, *They evidently shew*, what the Epistle of
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the Church of Smyrna tells us the *B. Polycarp*, and those who suffered with him did, *That during the sad hour of their sufferings they are strangers to the Body, and that these temporary Torments are light and inconsiderable to them, whilst their Hearts are set upon those e-*

Επιδεικνύμενες ἄπειτον ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκείνη τῇ ὥρᾳ βασάνιστο οὐδὲν τὸ σαρκὸς ἀπεδιδόμην . . . τὸ κρομμυκῶν κρετερόνεν βασάνων . . . τὸ καρδίας ἐφθαλμῶς ἀνέδολεπον πᾶν τὸ πνεῦμα τοῖς ὑπομείναντι ἀγαθῇ, ὡς ἔπευ ἡκούσιν ἔτι ὁφθαλμῶς ἰδεῖν, ἔτι ἐπὶ καρδίᾳ ἀνθρώπου ἀνέσθῃ, οὐκ ἐν οὐκ ἐπὶ κρυπτοῦ ὑπὸ τῆς καρδίας οὐκ ἐπὶ κρυπτοῦ ἀλλ' ἡδὲ ἀγγέλοις ἤσαν. *Epistola Ecclesiae Smyrnenfis de Martyrio Sancti Polycarpi* §. 2.

verlasting joys which are prepar'd for them that endure to the end, such as neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear heard, nor can enter into the Heart of Man, but were shewn to them by the Lord, who were now ready to leave Mortality, and enter upon the state of Angels. These are some of those ways, by which we may be supported and comforted, under all our Tryals and Sufferings *for Righteousness sake.*

* So had St. Polycarp, who, as the *Epistle of the Church of Smyrna* informs us, had a Vision three days before his being Apprehended, by which he was assured, that he should be burnt alive. Προσδύχμενος ἐν ὁπτιῶν ἡμέραις, ὡς τριῶν ἡμέρων ἔσκηθῆναι αὐτόν· καὶ εἶδεν περὶ σκεφάλαν ὑπὸ πυρὸς καὶ καυμάτων· καὶ εἶπεν· εἰπὼν ὡς τὸς συνώνους αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς ζωῆς, Δεῖ με ζῶντι κατεκωνθῆναι. §. 5. And so also Perpetua after she was in prison had a Vision, in which her Martyrdom was represented to her. See her *Acts* p. 8, 9. Edit. Oxon. 1680. The same thing is also related of S. Cyprian. See his *life* p. 7. written by his Deacon Pontius; who, as S. Hierome tells us, constantly attended him in his Sufferings, and was an Eye witness of his Martyrdom.

I must not here dissemble, that besides these *Ordinary*, the *Primitive Martyrs* had some *Extraordinary* encouragements, to enable them chearfully to undergo Persecution. God was pleas'd frequently to work *special Miracles* to support these his servants, and to manifest their Innocence to the world. * They had particular Revelations made to them, to forewarn them of what they were to undergo, that they

they might not be surpriz'd, as tho' some strange thing had happen'd to them. And whilst they were under the hands of their Tormentors, their sense of pain was frequently diminished, or wholly taken away, and sometimes miraculously turn'd into a pleasing sensation. The wild Beasts have laid aside their natural fierceness, and instead of running upon them with open mouths, have stood at an awful distance, and revered them. They have remain'd unhurt and untouched amidst the Flames. Tyrants have been struck with Admiration of them; and their very Executioners have become their Disciples. I am not insensible that these things will hardly find Belief in this incredulous Age: and therefore it may not be amiss to let the *Infidel* know, that they are transmitted down to us upon the certain Authority of such as were present at, and Eye witnesses of them. And so I pass to that other thing which consummates and Crowns the Happiness of those that suffer for Righteousness sake; viz.

1 It is said of Perpetua, That she was hardly sensible of any pain under her Sufferings. The same is related of Blandina, and Theodorus. But more especially remarkable is what the Epistle of the Churches of Lions, and Vienne in France, extant in Eusebius Histor. Ecclesiast. lib. V. cap. 1. relates concerning one that suffer'd in that cruel Butchery of the Christians at Lions, in these words: παρὰ πῖσιν δέξαν ἑνὶ ἄνθρωπον ἀνεκάλυψε καὶ ἀνερῶν τὸ σωματιον ἐν ταῖς μετέπειτα βασάνοις, καὶ τὴν ἰδεῖν ἐπέλαυνε τὴν περὶ τὴν καὶ τὴν χρῆσιν τῶν μελῶν, ὥστε μὴ κλάσιν ἀλλ' ἴασιν. Ἀλλ' ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὴν δευτέραν ἐπέλαυνε αὐτῇ γένεσιν.

2 This was so usual in the Primitive times, that we find S. Ignatius, who even parted after the Crown of Martyrdom, in some fear lest the Prayers of the Roman Christians should stop the mouths of the Leopards, and make them spare him, as they had done others: ὥστε πῶν δειλάνομα ἐχ' ἡψαντο. Epist. ad Rom. S. 5. The same Eusebius, who was an Eye witness, relates Histor. Ecclesiast. lib. VIII. c. 7. concerning the Christians in Diocletian's Persecution.

3 This is related to have happen'd at the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, in the Epistle of the Church of Smyrna S. 15. in these words: μερῶν καὶ ἐκλαμψῶν φλογος, θαύμα μίχα ἰδδον, οἱ ἰδεῖν ἰδδον οἱ καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ τῇ, εἰς τὸ ἀναρῆσαι τοῖς λοιποῖς πρὸς ἡμῶν, τὸ γὰρ πῦρ καὶ μίχα εἰδος ποιῶσαν, ὥστε ὁρῶν πλοῖα καὶ πνέοντες πληρομένη κύκλῳ περιετρίχον τὸ σῶμα τοῦ μάρτυρος. And other instances might be alleg'd of such as have quenched the violence of fire. The other things here mentioned might be fully proved, if it would not be thought too great a burden for the Margin.

Secondly, That infinitely Glorious and *Excellent* Reward which will be bestowed upon them after their *Sufferings are over*. That all good Men will have a certain and full Retribution and Recompence, for the good they have done, and the evils they have undergone for the sake of doing good, is a Truth, which the principles and light of Nature inclined the Heathen World in some measure to believe; but which, by the Revelation vouchsafed to Mankind by our *Saviour* is put beyond all possibility of doubt or uncertainty. The New Testament every where assures us, that there is a *Treasure*, a *Crown*, a *Kingdom*, which awaits such as are *faithful unto the death*, and which will most certainly be bestowed upon them *when they shall rest from their labours*, and *their good works follow them* into another World. And this Reward is that which makes the condition of Christians unspeakably happy, tho' in the accounts of such as will not, or care not to look beyond the Regions of this World, it may seem the most uncomfortable and miserable. For if by the Labour and Toil of a *few minutes* we can obtain *everlasting* security, ease, and enjoyment, if the Afflictions and Persecutions we suffer here, will not onely *for ever* procure us an Exemption from them hereafter, but also such a *Recompence of Reward* as does infinitely overbalance all that we have done or undergone, then certainly our circumstances,

Mat. XIX.

21.

2 Tim. IV.

8.

Jam. I. 12.

Rev. II.

10.

Mat. XXV.

34.

Rev. XIV.

13.

stances, be they what they will, are such, as have far greater Reason to *rejoyce in*, than to *complain of*.

But now, tho' all good Men will be rewarded in another World, infinitely beyond what their best services do deserve, yet all will not be rewarded alike. There are several degrees of Happiness and Glory in Heaven. *In my father's house*, John XIV. 2. *are many mansions*. And as among the *Angels* there are different Orders and Hierarchies; some of which may seem to have a more near and intimate fruition of the Beatifick Vision, and with the Angel *Gabriel* to *stand in the presence of God*, near his Throne, and under the more immediate Emanations of his Glory, others to be of an inferiour Nature and Rank, and therefore to have Posts and Employments of inferiour Dignity and Excellence, so in the Glorified State, wherein, it is said, we shall be *like and equal to the Angels*, there will, no doubt, be different degrees of Perfection and Excellence. 'Tis certain indeed, that the *Righteous shall shine as the stars for ever and ever*: but then we know that *one star differs from another star in Glory*. All that go out of this World have not the same dispositions of Soul to relish the joys of Heaven; and therefore all cannot *receive* the same degrees of Happiness. All have not laid up in store for themselves the same good foundation of good works against Eternity

Luke I. 19.

Math. XXII. 30.
Luke XX. 36.

Dan. XII. 3.
1 Cor. XV. 41.

Eternity to come, and therefore we must not think the same degrees of Glory will be *bestowed* upon all. If it be just with God to Reward the Good and Virtuous, then certainly the same Rules of Immutable Justice will oblige him to Recompence such as have been signally and heroically Virtuous with more Eminent and Superlative degrees of Happiness and Bliss.

Now there are none that have a fairer claim, and can put in a better plea for the first place of Honour and Glory in the Kingdom of Heaven, than those who have been sufferers *for Righteousness sake*. Their Virtue is of so exalted a pitch and such an heroical size, as to claim the highest and most valuable Reward. There is such a constellation of the brightest Graces and Excellencies in a *Martyr's* Soul, as makes it capable to receive the fullest streams of that joy, which flows from God's *presence for evermore*. In him we may see that *Victorious Faith*, in its greatest strength and vigour, which repels and overcomes the fiercest onsets of this World: that *flaming love*, which perfectly casts out all fear, and is properly *stronger than Death*: that *truely generous Courage*, which makes them encounter any difficulties, and undergo any sufferings rather than be Traitors to their Redeemer. The *Noble Army of Martyrs* therefore will stand in the next place to the great *Captain of their Salvation*, and be distinguished from

from the other happy Souls by the *white Robe*, the *Triumphant Palm*, and a more *Radiant Crown*. For these are they that came out of the great *Tribulation*, and have washed their Robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore, says the Angel in the Revelations, *are they before the Throne of God, and serve him day and night in his Temple. And he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them.* Rev. VII. 14.

And now from this pitch let us take a short view of the Happiness of the *Martyrs*. Their outward condition indeed *in the sight of the unwise* may seem to be miserable: but they have a spring of Peace and Delight rising up in their own breasts, which, together with the hope of a blessed Immortality, makes them, even under the worst that can befall them, *rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of Glory*. And when they shall have received the end of their Faith, and Love, and Hope, even the *salvation of their Souls*, these little Crosses shall then spring up into the brightest Crowns, and each honourable Wound, and Scar they have receiv'd in the Cause of *Christ*, shall be encircled with rays of Glory. And thus, I have gone thro' the two first things I propos'd. I must now in the

III. And last place, make some Application of what has been said, to the *sad Occasion* of the present melancholy Solemnity. We are assembled to lament

ment and bewail a *Crime*, committed upon this Day, of so *strange* and *unheard* of a Nature, that as it cannot be paralleled in the Histories of former Ages, so it would hardly find belief in the Generations to come, if the undoubted Records of time had not set it beyond any manner of uncertainty. A wickedness *so infamous*, that if this Day had not been set apart to shew our sorrow for, and to declare to the World our Detestation of it, the guilty Memory of this Day would have continued a perpetual Shame and Reproach to the *English Nation*. And as *this Fast* was appointed to be most Religiously observ'd by the highest Authority of the Kingdom, so we cannot but hope that the same Authority will *defend* and *enforce* the Observation of it, and that, as it has already in some measure, so it will continue to shew its *utmost Displeasure* against such, who would have the memory of this Day forgotten; since a *mournful* and *penitent* Remembrance of it, is the *onely means* we have left to expiate the guilt of that Innocent blood, which was then so *unjustly* and *inhumanely* spilt. The Sins of this Nation are great and numerous enough to draw down the heaviest Vengeance upon us, and I pray God we may never add to our many other provocations that of not perpetuating the XXXth. of *January*, the *Pious Observation* of which we may justly esteem the chief cause, that yet suspends
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those Judgements which so visibly hang over our guilty Heads.

If we consider the Excellencies both *Moral* and *Religious* of that Saintlike Prince, who was this Day *Murder'd*, we shall find cause enough to mourn for those Sins, which provoked God, not onely to take Him from us, but to make our *own hands* the unhappy Instruments by which we were depriv'd of so great a Blessing. I might here attempt the Character of our *B. Martyr*, and endeavour to represent Him in his Publick and in his Private Capacity, how truly great a *King*, and how good a *Man* he was, what an indulgent Parent of his Country, and what an exact and inflexible Observer and Follower of Truth and Virtue: I might mention that, which ought to render his Memory for ever precious and venerable to those of this *Church* and *this Place*, his being properly a Nursing Father to the one, and signally a *Favourer* and *Encourager* of the other, and that, not for any sinister Ends, or political Designs, but out of *Conscience* and *Affection*: to these I might add that, which was most remarkable in Him, and which, whatever some may think of it, ought to be reckon'd among the *brightest Ornaments* of a *King*, as it is the most *glorious Title* of the *Crown* of *England*, his being in reality a *Defender of the Faith*, and a *Protector* and *Enlarger* of the Rights and Discipline of the

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Church

Church of England, as well as a most Religious Observer of all the Rules and Orders of it. But these things, together with that noble train of Virtues which compleat the Character of this *Excellent* King, I shall leave to Posterity to amplify with those just *Encomiums*, which so properly belong unto them: and this the rather, because, tho' by the *Virulence* of some, and the *artful Insinuations* of others, his Character may seem of late to have been somewhat obscur'd, yet I cannot but hope, that there will a time come, when, like the Sun after an Eclipse, it will break forth again with a brighter *Lustre* and Glory. I shall therefore confine what I have to say upon this Occasion, within those bounds the *Text* has set me, and briefly consider, *First*, The *Righteousness* for which our *Martyr* Suffer'd, and, *Secondly*, His *Happiness* under his Sufferings. And

1. For the *Righteousness* for which he Suffer'd. There is nothing more evident to any one that will impartially consider the History of his troublesome Reign, than that he was very far from deserving any of those grievous Calamities that befell Him, by any Crime, I might say, by any Mismanagement of his own. The *Iniquity of the Times*, and the *ill Tempers* and *Dispositions* of some of his Subjects, together with the *Treachery* of others, were the sole Occasions of all that Confusion and Blood, by which this dismal Period stands

stands so remarkably distinguished. He was so willing to have avoided a War, that He divested himself of all that was necessary to begin or carry it on, to satisfy unreasonable Demands of his People; insomuch, that, when He was forced to defend himself, He was left so destitute of Assistance, that He and those few that then stood with him, like *David*, when about to engage the *Philistin*, became the contempt and scorn of their Enemies.

See Dugdale, and Perenchief.

The unhappy beginnings of his Troubles we may date from the first Invasion of the *Scots*, which was occasion'd by the endeavours He used to settle a *Uniformity* in Religion amongst them, but more especially by the care He took to rescue those Lands and Revenues out of the Sacrilegious hands of such as had Surreptitiously alienated them from the *Church* and *Crown* in the Minority of his Father. So that we see the beginning of that Tragical Scene of his Sufferings, is to be ascribed to his Zeal for Gods worship.

Dr. Perenchief p. 35. and 38.

If I should now trace His misfortunes thro' all those various Events, and turns of Providence He went thro', I might shew, that in the whole Course of his Troubles, it was his *firm adherence* to the *true Religion*, and the *happy Constitution* of the *Monarchy*, that brought upon him all those doleful Sufferings he underwent. His *frequent Messages* and *Concessions* to his Rebellious

Parliament, sufficiently demonstrated how desirous He was of Peace: but when He plainly saw that nothing under the *utter ruine* and *destruction* of the *Church* and *State* could procure his safety, He then prepared himself patiently to undergo the worst that his Enemies could inflict; and so fell this *glorious Saint*, a *Martyr* for the *Laws*, *Liberties*, and *Religion* of *England*. But tho' He *was thus punished in the sight of Men*, yet,

2. His *Happiness* under his Sufferings, which was the *second* thing I mention'd, ought to allay those Sorrows, and make us dry up those Tears, which this unjust and cruel Persecution of Him may have raised in us. If we look upon this most *Excellent Prince* and *best of Men*, in all His Sufferings we cannot choose but stand amaz'd at that *Courage* and *Magnanimity* with which He sustain'd those terrible Shocks of adverse Fortune, which constantly attended his Enterprises. The *Affronts* and *Indignities* put upon Him by his *Parliaments*, could not provoke, or disturb Him, nor the *Tumults* of his People raise any Stirs or Commotions within his Breast. The news of the ill success of His Arms, did not *in the least* Ruffle or Discompose the constant Tranquility of his Soul. And when He was *forced* to yield himself up to the *cruel Mercies* of his Enemies, with what *Patience* and *Chearfulness* did He bear the close confinement of His Prison, the *Impe-*
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rious Commands of the Souldiers hurrying Him from place to place? How *contented was He*, even under that, which of all His misfortunes *went the nearest His heart*, His being most inhumanely deny'd a Favour, which, as Himself observes, is always granted to the *meanest Prisoners and greatest Malefactors*, I mean the attendance of his Chaplains? With what a generous and truely Christian Courage did He endure the *Ignominious circumstances* of His *mock Tryal*, the *Pride and Contempt* of His *Insolent Judges*, refusing to hear his Plea to that unjust Jurisdiction they had Usurped over Him? And when they had determin'd to *Murder Him*, with what a settl'd Composure of Soul and Body did He receive that *most barbarous Sentence* which was pronounced upon Him? If we should now attend Him to the *Scaffold*, and consider what an *unshaken Trust* in God He shew'd in this last and most cruel part of his Tragedy, we shall be at a loss to find many Instances, even in the *Martyrologies* of the Primitive Church, that equal, hardly any that exceed *His Fortitude*. It must be an extraordinary *Firmness of Soul*, which could be bottom'd upon nothing else but the greatest *Innocency of Life*, and a certain hope of a *happy Eternity*, that enabled Him to undergo with such unconcerned Easiness the dismal Pomp of his *Martyrdom*. What a *perfect satisfaction* may we suppose

Εἶκον βα-
σιλική. ch.
24.

The staples
and cords,
with which
they design-
ed to have
ty'd Him to
the Block.

pose overspread his Mind, when he so chearfully bore the *ghastly sight* of the disguised Executioners, the *Terrour* of the Ax and the Block, and those *other Instruments* of their Cruelty, with which, if He had *resisted*, they would have *forced* His submission. *Vain Men!* who could think that this *last* Action of his Life would be so *unlike* the *former*? No: in this, as well as in the other parts of his *Passion*, He faithfully imitated our B. Saviour, and *went as a Lamb to the slaughter*, without thoughts of *Resistance* or *Revenge*, quietly and joyfully submitting himself to the will of his *Murderers*.

To witness all that I have said concerning the *Happiness* of our *Martyr* under his Sufferings, I might challenge the Testimony of his Friends and Servants, who constantly attended Him, I might appeal to his very Enemies, when they had Him in their Custody, and *rudely thrust themselves into*, and would be *witnesses* of all that He did in his most private Retirements: Did they ever discover in him any *Murmurings* or *Repinings* at the severity of Gods afflicting Providence, any thing that favoured of *Discontent* or *Uneasiness*? I might, I say, produce these, and many more Evidences to prove, how *Courageous*, how *Undaunted*, how *Contented*, and *well pleas'd* He was with all that befell him: but all these I willingly wave, and shall onely alledge that, which
will

will for ever remain an *undeniable proof* of his Happiness in his *Solitudes* and *Sufferings*, his incomparable Book, that most *lively Pourtraiture* of his Majesty conflicting with the greatest Miseries, but yet gloriously prevailing over them, and by Patient enduring becoming *more than Conqueror*.

And tho' an *infamous wretch*, as great an Enemy Toland.

to the Christian Religion, as to the Memory of this *B. King*, has lately made a *Feeble Effort* to Amyntor.

deprive him of the Honour of writing it, yet he

has receiv'd *such an Answer*, as has put it out of his Power to make *any Reply*; the Providence

of God having so order'd it, that even at this distance of time there is so great Evidence of the

genuineness of this Book, as ought effectually to silence those weak Objections which have been hitherto made against it.

Mr. Wagstaff's Defence of the Vindication of King Charles the Martyr.

What and how great degrees of *Happiness* and *Glory* He now enjoys, we cannot possibly conceive or comprehend: such they are, no doubt, as do *abundantly Recompence* all those grievous Sufferings He underwent here. By them indeed, he was depriv'd of an *Earthly Diadem*, but then he has (as himself in the moment of his Expiring said he should) *exchang'd this Corruptible for an Incorruptible Crown*, the fading transitory Pleasures of a perishing Kingdom here below, for the substantial Joys of one *Eternal in the Heavens*.

And

A Sermon before the University,

And now there remains nothing for us, but to *humble our selves*, and *beseech* Almighty God, that this *Innocent Blood*, which has so long cryed for *Vengeance*, may at length *cease* crying, and that he would not too severely *enter into Judgement with* us for *this*, or any other *heinous Sins* of this Nation. But if it should please God to *visit this* or our other *Iniquities* upon us, (and he alone knows how *soon* this may be) let us meekly acknowledge that he is *just in all that he brings upon us*, and that our punishment, how great soever, is less than what our Sins deserve.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Honour, Praise, Might, Majesty and Dominion, both now, and for ever. Amen.



FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page. 1. lin. 10. Temporary. p. 2. l. 5. their. p. 4. l. 2. of Kings. p. 5. l. 1. that they. *ibid.* l. 10. They be. p. 6. l. 9. of so. p. 7. l. 23. Diocletian. p. 21. l. 1. as we have. p. 26. l. 13. Lustre.

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